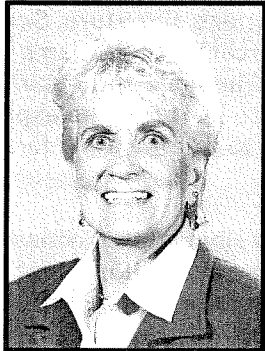


# Hammerstrom's

for the people  
in the 17th Senate District

# Hotline



State Senator

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**HOLIDAY TRAFFIC DEATHS DOWN** The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently reported that 705 people died on the nation's roads during the 2002 Christmas and New Year holiday season. Only four of those deaths occurred in Michigan. The NHTSA says studies show motorists are more likely to drive sober when patrols are combined with highly visible public awareness efforts. Hoping to keep up with this declining trend, the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) increased the number of law enforcement officials patrolling the state's roadways during the 2003 holiday season. *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* is a nationwide "high visibility enforcement" initiative supported by federal traffic safety funds for increased patrols in specific areas, along with advertising efforts to ensure public awareness of the program. Jackson, Monroe, and Washtenaw are included in the list of counties receiving funding for overtime patrols.

**DID YOU KNOW?** According to statistics from OHSP, nearly 35 percent of all traffic fatalities in Michigan still involve alcohol and/or drugs. Last year, 422 people died and 9,414 were injured in alcohol-related crashes on Michigan roadways.

**LEGISLATORS FORM HEALTHY MICHIGAN CAUCUS** Legislators from the Senate and the House recently joined with Surgeon General Dr. Kimberlydawn Wisdom, the Department of Community Health, the Governor's office, and the Michigan Public Health Institute to promote physical and fiscal health and call attention to the debilitating effects of chronic diseases on our state's residents and economy. Legislators invited members of the Executive Branch to join them in a spirited challenge to help "cut the fat out of state government." Those who accepted the challenge were given pedometers to keep track of the number of steps they take from December 8 to April 2. The "10,000 steps per day" challenge was enthusiastically accepted, with the Senate, House, and Executive members predicting victory for their respective "teams." The Healthy Michigan Caucus members will be provided monthly information in regard to specific chronic illnesses and their impact on the state.

**PAYDAY LENDING REGULATION ON ITS WAY TO GOVERNOR** Legislation to regulate the payday lending industry was approved by both the Senate and House of Representatives and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Senate Bill 474 establishes the maximum interest rate payday lenders could charge at 13.25 percent of the loan's face value. Other components of the bill require payday lenders to be licensed by the Office of Financial and Insurance Services (OFIS); place limits on both the size and duration of the loans; require providers to post notices explaining the service; establish a channel for customer complaints; and give OFIS the authority to punish providers for not protecting consumers.

**LEGISLATURE DEMANDS HARSHER PENALTIES FOR IMPROPER BURIALS** The Senate and House have concurred on legislation to impose harsher penalties for the improper disposal of a deceased person and they have sent it to the Governor for her approval. Senate Bills 508 and 511 make improper disposal of human remains and failure to dispose of human remains in a timely manner felonies, carrying maximum ten-year prison sentences. The legislation was introduced in response to the horrific tragedy last year in Noble, Georgia. There, a crematorium was found to have dumped on its property more than 300 bodies that were meant for cremation. Ashes provided to families were later found to be wood chips and cement dust.

If you would like to receive future issues of Hammerstrom's Hotline via e-mail, please contact me at [SenBHammerstrom@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:SenBHammerstrom@senate.michigan.gov).